

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**
2 **OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**
3 **HELD SEPTEMBER 23, 2024**
4

5 A duly called Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Great Falls Public
6 Schools was held at the District Offices Building, 1100 4th Street South, on the 23rd day
7 of September 2024.

8
9 Chairperson Johnson reported that, per Board Policy 1420, all Board meetings will now
10 be recorded and posted on the District website for one (1) year.

11
12 **ROLL CALL:** Superintendent Hoyer took roll call.

13
14 **Trustees Present:** Gordon Johnson - Chairperson
15 Mark Finnicum
16 Marlee Sunchild
17 Amie Thompson
18 Paige Turoski

19
20 **Trustees Absent:** Kim Skornogoski – Vice Chairperson – Excused
21 Bill Bronson - Excused

22
23 **Others Present:** Heather Hoyer, Superintendent; Luke Diekhans, Director of Human
24 Resources; Lance Boyd and Jackie Mainwaring, Executive Directors of Student
25 Achievement; and Stephanie Becker, Director of the Great Falls Public Schools
26 Foundation. Also present was Tom Cabbage, Great Falls Education Association
27 President.

28
29 At 5:30 pm, Chairperson Johnson called to order the Regular Meeting of the Board of
30 Trustees.

31
32
33 **ADOPT AGENDA**

34
35 Motion – Mark Finnicum, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to adopt
36 the agenda as presented.

37
38
39 **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**

40
41 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Mark Finnicum, passed unanimously to approve
42 the Consent Agenda as presented.

43
44 **A. Minutes of the September 9, 2024, Regular Board Meeting** – The Board approved
45 the minutes of the September 9, 2024, Regular Board Meeting as presented.

46
47 **B. Personnel Actions** – The Board approved the Personnel Actions as presented.
48

1 **C. Good Apple Awards** – The Board approved the nominations for Good Apple
2 Awards: Patrick Jewell, 6th grade teacher at Riverview Elementary; Zach Mendenhall,
3 General Manager at the Admiral Beverage Corporation and Pepsi Distributor; Jack
4 Norris, Facilities Assistant for Great Falls Public Schools Buildings and Grounds; Zack
5 Ringler, Social Studies teacher at Great Falls High School; and Amy Kuntz, Math
6 Intervention teacher at East Middle School.

7
8 **D. Montana School Bus Driver Certificates – OPI TR-35’s** – The Board approved the
9 Montana School Bus Driver Certificates – OPI TR-35’s for the individuals listed in the
10 agenda.

11
12 **E. Student Activity Accounts for August 2024** - The Board approved Student Activity
13 Accounts for August 2024.

14
15 **F. Confirmation of Baseball Committee Community Members** – The Board
16 approved Kali Tuckerman, Zachary Griffin, and Jon Boutilier to represent Great Falls on
17 the Baseball Advisory Committee as presented.

18
19
20 **COMMUNICATION**

21
22 **A. Character Strong – Mountain View Elementary School** – Kim Marzolf, Principal,
23 Barbie Foster and Angie Schei, 6th grade teachers, along with two (2) student
24 representatives reported on *Character Strong* and what Respect means to Mountain
25 View Elementary School.

26
27 **B. Superintendent Report** – Superintendent Hoyer reported that Chief Joseph
28 Elementary School has been named a 2024 National Blue Ribbon School.
29 September 17, 2024, was National IT Professionals Day. Mrs. Hoyer reviewed some
30 duties of Great Falls Public Schools’ technology staff, and she thanked them for their
31 work.

32 Great Falls High School hosted their first “Night of Champions” event to honor the
33 legacy, pride, tradition and excellence of players and coaching alumni from twelve (12)
34 of the last eighteen (18) State Championship teams.

35 Superintendent Hoyer recognized Cody Hoehn, a senior at C.M. Russell High School,
36 for completing his Eagle Scout project. He assembled a group of thirty (30) volunteers
37 who spent 210 hours and used 21 gallons of paint to cover a 2,400 square foot area at
38 Memorial Stadium.

39 She thanked various community partners for their continued support. Dean Jardee,
40 Montana PTA President, presented Jamie Marshall with the Montana PTA Volunteer of
41 the Year Award.

42 Superintendent Hoyer spoke on Student Activity Participation and how one (1) in every
43 three (3) students are connected to their schools because of sports or extracurricular
44 activities and what they provide.

45 Mrs. Hoyer reported that the District has already had to direct resources to schools to
46 address events that have turned out to be either hoaxes or rumors. These events
47 impact the ability to learn and/or teach, cause anxiety, re-route community resources,

1 and are difficult to manage due to social media. She thanked everyone involved in the
2 process who make sure our schools are safe.

3
4 **C. Audience Communication** – Community Member Gary Stewart questioned if the
5 District still teaches handwriting as part of the curriculum or if it strictly computer based.
6 He stated that he has received letters from his grandson, and they are illegible.

7
8
9 **ACTION ITEMS**

10
11 **A. Financial Report and Check Register for August 2024** – Superintendent Hoyer
12 presented the financial report and check register for August 2024.

13
14 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Mark Finnicum, passed unanimously to approve
15 the August 2024 Financial Report and Accounts Payable checks #135216 - #135599 in
16 the amount of \$1,626,474.47 and Payroll checks #82014 - #82097 in the amount of
17 \$135,505.58 as presented.

18
19 **B. Surplus/Transfer of ½ of One Lot at the Original Portage Townsite** –

20 Superintendent Hoyer explained in 1915, half of one lot located in the Portage Townsite
21 was donated to School District 72 for school purposes. On July 1, 1977, School District
22 72 was abandoned and annexed to Great Falls School District 1. The property, located
23 approximately nineteen miles northeast of Great Falls, included a reversionary clause in
24 the deed stating that ownership would revert to the original owners or their heirs if the
25 land ceased to be used by the second parties. If this said .5 lot is not to be used for
26 school purposes or should cease to be used, it shall revert to the first parties again. She
27 stated that it appeared that a schoolhouse may have once been located on the site, but
28 the land is vacant with no buildings remaining. Superintendent Hoyer reviewed the
29 options available to the District by state law and suggested that the Board adopt the
30 resolution declaring the property obsolete and authorizing the deed transfer back to the
31 original owner(s).

32
33 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to declare
34 the ½ lot at the Original Portage Townsite as obsolete for school purposes and to follow
35 state law to surplus the property.

36
37
38 **ACTION: OTHER**

39
40 There were no items extracted from the Consent Agenda to discuss.

41
42
43 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**

44
45 **A. Staffing Update Report** - Director of Human Resources, Luke Diekhans explained
46 that Great Falls Public Schools is the third largest employer in Great Falls and currently
47 employs 1,903 staff members. Luke reported that the retirement rates along with the low
48 employment rates contribute to the hardship of recruitment. Great Falls Public Schools

1 (GFPS) has come up with innovative strategies such as job fairs, advertising, and
2 recruitment events to help with these challenges. Luke presented graphs representing
3 applications, hires and terminations for the previous five (5) years. He also reported on
4 the current employment openings.

5
6 **B. Lincoln Elementary School and Sacajawea Elementary School New Playground**
7 **Updates** – Ty Moore, Sacajawea Elementary School Principal, and Steve Yates,
8 Lincoln Elementary School Principal, thanked their schools PTA members for their
9 dedication and fundraising efforts to update their schools’ playgrounds. They then
10 reviewed the changes to each playground.

11
12 **C. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments**

13 Everyone wished a Happy Birthday to Trustee Turoski.

14 All Trustees congratulated Chief Joseph Elementary School for being awarded the
15 National Blue-Ribbon Award.

16 Trustee Turoski stated that she appreciates hearing elementary students talk about
17 *Character Strong*. She and Chairperson Johnson stated that they attended the High
18 School House ribbon cutting and it is something they look forward to each year.

19 Trustees Sunchild and Thompson thanked Mr. Stewart for providing a copy of his
20 grandson’s letter for them to read. Trustee Sunchild said that fine motor skills are hard
21 to teach as well as time consuming. Trustee Sunchild also reported that she was gifted
22 homemade honey from Paris Gibson Education Center.

23
24
25 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

26
27 Chairperson Johnson said the next Regular Board Meetings are scheduled for Monday,
28 October 14, 2024, and Monday, October 28, 2024.

29
30
31 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**

32
33 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to adjourn
34 the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 6:47 p.m.

35
36
37
38
39 _____
Gordon Johnson, Chairperson

40 _____
41 Heather Hoyer, Superintendent
42